

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12 IO-14
SSM-05 H-02 PA-02 SIG-03 SS-15 SP-02 PM-05 INR-10
SES-02 SAA-01 NSAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 /120 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
PA/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. KORN
NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----070535 220203Z /21

O 212140Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
NSC WASHDC 0000
DOD
USICA
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

UNCLAS STATE 212179

CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - AUGUST 21

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR AUGUST 21, 1978.
SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS MR. THOMAS RESTON.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT THERE ON VARIOUS ACTS OF
TERRORISM THAT TOOK PLACE, AND APPARENT RETALIATION, OVER
THE WEEKEND?
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A. IF YOU'RE REFERRING TO THE INCIDENT IN LONDON, I DO.

WITH REGARD TO THE INCIDENT IN LONDON, THIS IS A DEPLORABLE
AND SAVAGE ACT OF TERRORISM THAT BROUGHT DEATH AND INJURY
TO INNOCENT PERSONS. WE CONDEMN THE ACT AND ITS
PERPETRATORS. TERRORISM OF THIS SORT HAS NO JUSTIFICATION.
WE NOTE THAT THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF
PALESTINIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS GROUP HAS CLAIMED CREDIT.

Q. HOW ABOUT THE RETALIATION WHICH HAS SINCE TAKEN PLACE?

A. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WERE RETALIATORY AIR STRIKES
ON PALESTINIAN CAMPS NEAR THE AIRPORT--I SUPPOSE THAT'S IN

BEIRUT AND AT DAMOUR--AND WE DEPLORE THIS CYCLE OF
VIOLENCE.

Q. DO YOU KNOW IF AMERICAN AIRPLANES OR WEAPONS WERE
USED?

A. I DONT HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON WHAT TYPE OF AIRCRAFT

WERE USED IN LEBANON.

Q. COULD YOU FIND OUT, PLEASE?

A. I'LL TRY.

Q. COULD YOU GIVE US A RATIONALE FOR SAYING WHY THE STATE DEPARTMENT TAKES NOTE OF CLAIMING OF CREDIT BY THIS SPECIAL OPERATIONS GROUP?

A. I'M NOT SURE I CAN GIVE YOU A RATIONALE FOR THAT. OFTEN WE REPEAT WHAT WE HAVE SEEN OTHER PEOPLE TAKING CREDIT FOR. I DON'T HAVE A SPECIFIC RATIONALE IN THIS CASE AS TO WHY WE ARE DOING THAT.
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Q. WELL, ONE COULD DEDUCE THAT YOU WERE DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN VARIOUS GROUPS OF PALESTINIANS FOR A REASON.

A. I DON'T HAVE ANY LARGER REASON BEHIND IT. I'M JUST NOT IN A POSITION TO SPECULATE ON THE MOTIVES OF THE PERSON WHO DRAFTED THIS STATEMENT.

Q. WHAT EFFECT DO YOU THINK THIS CYCLE OF VIOLENCE WILL HAVE ON THE SUMMIT?

A. I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO ADDRESS ITS IMPLICATIONS OR LACK THEREOF ON THE CAMP DAVID MEETING.

Q. DID YOU CONVEY THESE SENTIMENTS TO THE ISRAELIS DIRECTLY?

A. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER WE HAVE OR NOT.

Q. COULD YOU FIND OUT, PLEASE?

A. YES.

Q. COULD YOU TAKE A QUESTION ON THAT? IT MAY SEEM A TERRIBLY TINY NUANCE, BUT I CAN RECALL PREVIOUS OCCASIONS WHEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT DEPLORED, THROUGH ITS SPOKESMAN, VARIOUS TERRORISTS ACTIONS WITHOUT TAKING NOTE OF A

PARTICULAR GROUP.

A. YES, I'LL TAKE THAT QUESTION. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I'LL BE ABLE TO GET YOU AN ANSWER TO IT, BUT I'LL TAKE THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THERE IS A RATIONALE FOR SAYING WHAT
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I'VE JUST SAID.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE APPARENT TERRORISM IN IRAN?

A. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION BEYOND WHAT WE HAVE SEEN IN PRESS REPORTS ABOUT THIS TRAGIC EVENT. WE REGRET WHAT IS OBVIOUSLY A TRAGIC LOSS OF LIFE, AND EXTEND OUR SYMPATHIES AND CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS OF THIS TERRIBLE DISASTER. THAT'S ABOUT ALL I CAN SAY AT THIS POINT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO MR. BEGIN'S REMARKS OVER THE WEEKEND ON SEEKING A PARTIAL PEACE AT THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT?

A. NO.

Q. HAVE YOU TAKEN NOTE OF THEM?

A. WE OBVIOUSLY READ THE PRESS, BUT I HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER YOU AS A PRELUDE. AS I THINK I SAID ON FRIDAY, I'M NOT GOING TO BE IN A POSITION OF ANALYZING PUBLICLY EVERY STATEMENT MADE BY VARIOUS LEADERS.

Q. APART FROM ANALYZING PUBLIC STATEMENTS, DO YOU SEE THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERING A PARTIAL SINAI SETTLEMENT AS A POTENTIAL GOAL OF THE CAMP DAVID MEETING?

A. NO. PRIOR TO THIS MEETING, I'M JUST NOT GOING TO BE IN A POSITION TO BE ABLE TO SPECULATE ON WHAT WE DO, OR DON'T SEE, OR WHAT WE DO OR DON'T HOPE WILL COME OUT OF THE SUMMIT. I THINK WE ARE WORKING HARD TOWARD GETTING READY FOR THE SUMMIT. WE'RE SURE THE OTHER TWO PARTIES ARE ALSO WORKING HARD, BUT I REALLY AM NOT IN A POSITION TO ADDRESS SUMMIT-RELATED QUESTIONS PUBLICLY.

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Q. CAN YOU REAFFIRM THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO SEE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WITH A RESOLUTION, AT LEAST IN PRINCIPLE, OF THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION?

A. I AM AFRAID THAT I AM NOT GOING TO BE IN A POSITION OF SPECULATING ON WHAT OUR POSITION IS GOING TO BE AT THE SUMMIT, AND I'M NOT MEANING TO SIGNAL A CHANGE IN POLICY.

I AM MEANING TO FOLLOW GUIDANCE, WHICH HAS BEEN STRONGLY SUGGESTED TO ME, THAT WE WANT TO RESERVE COMMENT ON ALL SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF THE SUMMIT PRIOR TO THE SUMMIT'S TAKING PLACE. AND, THEREFORE, THIS EXERCISE, BECAUSE OF THE CONSTRAINTS I'M UNDER, IS SIMPLY, I'M AFRAID, GOING TO BE OF MARGINAL USE TO YOU LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

Q. I HAVE A QUESTION WHICH IS NOT SUBSTANTIVE IN NATURE, BUT DEALS WITH THE SUMMIT. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH "NEWSWEEK", PRIME MINISTER BEGIN SAYS: "MY PERSONAL ADVISE TO PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD BE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO FULFILL THE VERY USEFUL FUNCTION OF HONEST BROKER," WHICH APPEARS TO BE IN CONTRADICTION WITH WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER SAID ON THURSDAY, WHEN HE SAID THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE MORE THAN A MEDIATOR AND A MESSAGE-CARRIER.

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE METHODOLOGY THAT BEGIN SEEMS TO BE PROPOSING?

A. NO SIR, I DO NOT. I AM RELUCTANT AND IN FACT, WILL REFUSE TO GO BEYOND WHAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAS SAID ABOUT OUR ROLE AT THIS TIME IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS AND WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID.

I THINK THEY HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT AS FORTHCOMINGLY AS THEY UNCLASSIFIED

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ARE ABLE TO DO ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE ROLE WE WILL BE FULFILLING. I HAVE NO ELABORATION TO ADD TO THE STATEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE, AND I HAVE NO COMMENT ON MR. BEGIN'S ADVICE.

CHRISTOPHER

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